

ment of Mr. Gilbert.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CITIZEN:

SIR: No appointment to a local public position of late years has occasioned more discussion than that made Monday night, when the Chairman of the Town Council reappointed Seymour P. Gilbert a member of the Board of Tax Assessors.

This appointment is the pivotal issue in the local campaign that will end at the polls on Tuesday, April 8. The vote of the Council on the confirmation of the appointment is only a slight indication of the intensity of popular feeling on the issue now before the people. The reasons that are at the bottom of the agitation that has been stirred up by the action of the Chairman of the Council may be few or many, well founded or unfounded, reasonable or unreasonable, but in this instance it will be considered only in its relation to the valuation of property for taxing purposes. Mr. Gilbert has been in public life almost from boyhood. He holds the record as the youngest man elected by popular vote to public office in this town; both by experience and natural ability he is the best informed man on public matters in this town to-day. Two years ago he was appointed a member of the Board of Tax Assessors, and, as we put natural and proper, he became the head and front of that board, and the casual stranger here would no doubt be surprised to learn that Mr. Gilbert is only one of three members of the board. No body appears to blame Mr. Baxter or Mr. Cockefair for increased assessments, but much is heard in the way of exaction and abuse of Mr. Gilbert by aggrieved taxpayers. There is no doubt but what Mr. Gilbert has been the master hand and mind in the recent revision and readjustment of property assessments in this town, and he has had to stand the brunt of that abuse that generally, and not always wisely, follows an increase in the amount of taxes that property owners are called on to pay. The drastic criticism of the angry has been in some measure offset by the intelligent praise of others who were in a position to judge the work of the Tax Board on its merits of equity and justice. The members of the Board of Commissioners of Appeals were pleased and surprised with the spirit of equity that pervaded the assessment made by the assessors. The State Board of Taxation, a body whose experience throughout the State fits it to express judgment from a comparative point of view, expressed admiration for the intelligence, completeness, and fairness of the Bloomfield assessment. Property owners who are familiar with local conditions here and were aware that property valuations must be raised to meet changed conditions, expressed satisfaction with the manner in which the problem had been met and solved.

But whether or not Mr. Gilbert is to be praised than blamed is but a minor matter. The question is as to the reasonableness of the blame. Previous to the advent of Mr. Gilbert into the tax board the township was threatened with a tax rate of 3.12. By enforced curtailments this was forced down to 2.94. Subsequent indignation followed that signature, and the people gave vent to their anger by voting foolishly for low appropriations for public purposes and crippled the government.

The situation had reached a critical stage. Public expenditures had run far ahead of public revenues, and the annual increase in tax valuations by reason of buildings and other improvements was nearly sufficient to make up the deficiency.

It was apparent to every property owner who had studied the situation at that a four per cent. tax rate threatened the town. It was at this critical stage that Mr. Gilbert appeared on the scene as a member of the Board of Tax Assessors.

A thorough revision of the whole assessment work of the previous year is made. The Board personally inspected every property in the town and revised valuations on property that compared more equitably with the true value of it. The increased valuations have withstood the test. They will not be lowered whether Mr. Gilbert is an assessor or whether he is not. A few cases of error in judgment may be discovered, but they will not materially affect the work as a whole. Present valuation, if Bloomfield remains an independent municipality, will for several years. No board of assessors will ever be appointed for the task of lowering them. If good judgment and discretion is applied to the expenditures the raised valuation will prove a sound basis for a safe tax rate.

I undoubtedly had in view the work done in the Revision of the law and he had no further to go than Gilbert's associates in the work for evidence to prove the amount of the credit due to him by Mr. Ward.

Ward had in hand a competent and qualified man in that direction and he made no mistake.

He has no reason to suspect that special care of the current year to be, is in the Board of Tax Assessors otherwise taxpayer.

BOARD OF HEALTH

Organized for the Existing Year—Dr. Ward Re-elected President, Wm. L. Johnson, Secretary and Registrar, and Seymour P. Gilbert Appointed Inspector for a Term of Three Years

The Board of Health held its regular monthly meeting Thursday night and organized for the ensuing year by electing Dr. E. M. Ward, President, Wm. L. Johnson, Secretary and Registrar, and Charles H. Hailepenny as Council. The Board re-appointed Seymour P. Gilbert Inspector for the term of three years.

After hearing the report of Inspector Gilbert as to the number of cases of smallpox, and the condition of the patients in the isolation hospital, the Board discussed the subject of compulsory vaccination. Dr. Ward and Mr. Caven stated that the Board of Education had complied with the Board's request in regard to the vaccination of the pupils attending the public schools.

Mr. T. Horan Johnson urged that the Board enforce compulsory vaccination. It was the only means, he said, by which the present epidemic could be stamped out. He favored sending a physician and a policeman to the houses of those people who would not be vaccinated and enforce the vaccination.

Other members of the Board, while they agreed with Mr. Johnson that every one should be vaccinated, were inclined rather to persuasive than compulsory methods. It was thought that if factory owners and others employing help were requested to have all their employees vaccinated, it would go a long way toward securing general vaccination. It was decided to make such a request to all factory owners in the town.

Mr. Johnson also spoke on the matter of publicity given the presence of smallpox here, and which he regarded as unwise and of material injury to the town. He advised that the inspector give out no information other than to the Board, and that as much secrecy as possible be maintained in the conveying of patients to the hospital. In travelling through the State Mr. Johnson said that he had heard more about smallpox in Bloomfield than in any other town, and the publicity was doing the town no good.

Thomas Connell made a protest to the Board about the condition of premises on Glenwood Avenue where smallpox prevailed. The situation there, Mr. Connell said, was damaging to all surrounding property. The Board referred the matter to a committee.

A large number of bills for expenses incurred in the smallpox cases were ordered paid.

Appropriations.

The appropriations recommended by the Board of Estimate last year were as follows: Street lighting, \$3,750; police, \$6,800; fire, \$3,150; road repairs, \$8,000; poor, \$3,000; water, \$5,500; bonds and interest, \$18,000; schools, \$11,500; incidentals, \$15,000; payment of floating indebtedness, \$8,000. The appropriations last year footed up \$18,700, an increase over the previous year of \$24,000. The increases were itemized as follows:

One chief item of increase was an appropriation of \$8,000 to go towards reducing the floating indebtedness. Another considerable item was that for school purposes, amounting to \$8,500. The incidentals account showed an increase of \$8,000; the street lighting fund \$250; police \$800, fire \$150, and the water account \$500.

In the make up of the annual financial budget the Councilmen have to take into consideration some factors that are beyond their control. The county tax is such an item. The Town Council has no say as to how much shall be placed in the tax levy for county purposes. During the past year \$26,746.64 of the money raised in this town by taxation went to the county. Again the Council must make allowances for delinquent taxpayers and other contingencies, and a percentage must be allowed for in the tax levy to cover such points of uncertainty.

ANNEXATION BILL PASSED

The Bill Was Regarded as Dead, and Its Sudden Resurrection Has Alarmed the Anti—All Hope of Killing the Bill Now Rests With Assemblyman Boyd.

The Bloomfield Annexation bill was passed by the Senate as the last stroke of Wednesday's work. There are equals in sight for the bill when it comes to the House, Assemblyman Boyd having a fight in store against the proposition.

As passed, the bill contains a clause providing for a vote on its adoption to be taken at a special election in the town.

From its nature the bill, in the regular course of events, would be referred in the House to the Committee on Towns and Townships, of which Mr. Boyd is chairman; and if the bill gets to his committee it is unlikely to be heard from in the Legislature again this year.

The sudden resurrection and passage by the Senate of the Annexation bill has caused some uneasiness among the anti-annexationists, and it is feared that some trouble will be experienced in preventing the bill becoming a law.

A prominent leader in the ranks of the annexationists said yesterday that he had no doubt at all that the bill would be passed and submitted to a vote of the people. He also said that the annexation sentiment had gained remarkable strength within the past few days.

The Annexation bill laid dormant for about two weeks, and some people who claimed to have inside information predicted that it would not get out of the Senate Committee. The predictions have sadly misfired.

Former Assemblyman Charles W. Powers, who is the recognized leader of the annexation forces, and who is a sincere advocate of the cause as a matter of public policy, has been much at Trenton of late, and what Mr. Powers does not know about the devious ways of getting bills through the Legislature is not worth knowing, and the sudden outcropping of the bill is attributed to some hidden string pulled by Mr. Powers. The opponents of annexation will do well to keep a sharp eye on Trenton next week.

Quite the Contrary.

Last week's Bloomfield CITIZEN worked itself up into fever heat over a recent editorial in the Times, in which the opinion was expressed that from all appearances the sentiment for the annexation of Bloomfield to Newark was so strong that the plan would be carried into effect. The CITIZEN accused the Times of being "hand-in-hand with the clique of politicians who are preparing to carry through the Greater Newark project." Just how this reasoning was arrived at is a question which only the Bloomfield editor can answer.

The Times, instead of favoring it, is opposed to the Greater Newark scheme and always was. It hopes that the day when Essex County will be converted into one municipality is very remote. But there is no use disregarding coming events, and rather than be caught napping, the towns and townships should size up the situation and become prepared for it, in order to preserve their autonomy when the probable, though quite remote, consolidation takes place.

The Times knows nothing of political cliques. It does know that there are leaders in both parties who are factors in shaping public affairs, and while they are looked upon as a clique or "ring," they seldom try to bring about anything that has the opposition of the majority of the people. And so long as the referendum and popular suffrage continue, the country is safe and nobody will be hurt; least of all our friend who presides over the destinies of the Bloomfield CITIZEN.—Montclair Times.

Some allusion by the editor of the Times to the annexation fight going on here led to the inference that the Times was under the impression that the majority of the people of Bloomfield wanted this town annexed to Newark. The above outspoken sentiments of the Times can lead to no other conclusion but that the inference was an unjust one. The CITIZEN heartily seconds the advice of the Times, "rather than be caught napping the towns and townships should size up the situation and become prepared for it in order to preserve their autonomy."

THE ELECTION.

Republican Executive Committee Will Meet Next Week to Fix Dates for Primaries and Conventions—Citizens Ticket Petitions in Circulation.

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In the Ward Convention in the First and Third Wards there is a wide difference in the representation from the different election districts. In the First Ward Convention the First District will have sixteen delegates, and the Second District ten delegates, but as it is the First District's representative in the Council whose term expires, the circumstances just suits the occasion.

In the Third Ward the case is just the opposite. The Councilman whose term expires is from the First District of that Ward, and by right of courtesy he is entitled to a re-nomination, but the First District will have only five delegates in the Ward Convention, while the Second District will have thirteen delegates.

It is rumored that the Republicans will make no changes among their candidates for Councilman. All of those whose terms expire, having served only one term, and it is said they will all stand for re-nomination if it is tendered them, will make no fight for the position.

The Water Question.

It is officially understood that the terms of a new water contract between this town and the Orange Water Company are held in abeyance pending the outcome of the negotiations now going on between the water company and the city of East Orange.

It is probable that East Orange will purchase water from Newark on the expiration of the existing contract with the Orange Water Company on July 1. Newark has offered to sell water to East Orange for \$50 a million gallons, the minimum quantity to be used being a million and a half gallons a day. This is a lower rate than any municipality pays to the various private corporations which furnish water in this neighborhood. Richard V. Lindabury has been appointed associate counsel with City Counsel Woodruff to apply to the court for the appointment of commissioners to condemn the company's distributing system in the city. The water to be purchased from Newark will come from the Cedar Grove reservoir.

If the above outlined project is carried out the town of Bloomfield will be the only customer of the Orange Water Company. Another important question is how much of the Orange Water Company's plant the city of East Orange will buy. The East Orange Gazette says:

"The Act of 1876, under which proceedings are to be conducted, authorizes a municipality to acquire and a water company to sell ALL its property, etc., and whether the authority of that act could be expanded to mean also ANY PART of such property would no doubt become a matter of agreement between the parties in interest, and would be settled amicably and without dispute. The whole question will be one of compensation, and the city can no doubt take or leave what pleases it, so long as it pays for the actual damage done. The appraisers will undoubtedly fix the amount at such a sum as will cover not only the value acquired by the city, but the value of which the water company is deprived, in whatever form that value may have existed. Appraisers acting under appointment by and authority of the courts will not be permitted to either confiscate or destroy private property for public benefit, without making adequate compensation therefor."

If East Orange takes the entire plant Bloomfield may be compelled to look elsewhere for water.

ANNEXATION BLOCKED.

HOUSE COMMITTEE DECIDES NOT TO REPORT THE BILL.

Delegation from This Town Given a Hearing on Wednesday—Convincing Arguments Against Annexation Submitted to the Committee—Looks as if the Bill was a Dead One.

It is generally believed that the annexation bill has been effectively blocked. The House Committee on Towns and Municipalities voted on Wednesday against reporting the bill to the House of Assembly. Assemblyman Boyd is Chairman of that Committee, and his sentiments in the matter were said to be on the side of the anti-annexationists. Word was received here at a late hour on Tuesday evening that the House Committee would give a hearing at ten o'clock on Wednesday morning on the annexation bill, and Assemblyman Boyd desired a delegation of citizens of this town present at Trenton. This short and sudden notice caught the anti-annexationists unprepared, but by dint of an energetic use of the telephone the call was widely spread, and early on Wednesday morning a representative delegation of "anti" consisting of Theodore H. Ward, David G. Garbrant, Allison Dodd, Thomas Oakes, John Newton, James B. Beach, Henry F. Dodd, M. N. Higgins, Joseph M. Mann, William Supple and George W. Cook, were on the way to Trenton. When they reached the capital they found Charles W. Powers and Richard K. Schuyler on hand in the interest of annexation. Assemblyman Boyd presided at the hearing. Charles W. Powers spoke in favor of annexation, and made an exhaustive argument on that side of the issue.

David G. Garbrant was spokesman for the annexation party, and made a forcible, clear and logical statement against the annexation bill. Mr. Garbrant went over the same ground that he had covered with his statement before the Senate Committee, but added much that had been gathered from a study of public sentiment since that time. He was followed by Mr. Oakes, Mr. Beach and Mr. Higgins, and when both sides had been heard, the Committee voted unanimously not to report the bill to the House.

In the ordinary course of legislation such action is regarded as a death blow to a bill, and it will require extraordinary power and influence to resurrect this one. While fully realizing the full extent of the possibilities of resurrecting the bill, the anti came home from Trenton embusht with the conviction that the annexation bill had received its death blow, in so far as this session of the Legislature was concerned.

An extract from a speech by Major Lentz before the East Orange Republican Club aptly applies to the annexation movement which has stirred up this town. The Major, in the course of his remarks, said: "Every year or two some gentlemen conceive the idea that some of the municipalities of the county should be annexed to Newark. Bills are introduced on the representation that the people favor them; but, later, opposition so formidable develops that they have to be withdrawn. I am a citizen of Newark, and I am proud of the city. I believe in its prosperity and in its future greatness, but I believe no municipal government should be destroyed and no municipality annexed to Newark without the consent of that municipality."

The annexation movement in this town was an erroneous conception. The grumbling of a few was mistaken for the thundering of the many. When the people were brought face to face with the issue promoters of annexation were surprised at their own misjudgment of public sentiment. While annexation as an issue may be laid aside, some disagreeable effects will arise from the agitation of the matter, especially in politics.

Good Roads.

A stretch of one hundred miles of continuous macadam, making a circuit of New Jersey towns, has recently been completed by the finishing of a little strip of eight miles between Far Hills and Somerville. The circuit is perhaps the longest of any in the country. It takes in Bernardsville, Morristown, Madison, Chatham, Summit, Millburn, Springfield, South Orange, Orange, Newark, Jersey City, Elizabeth, Westfield, Bound Brook and Plainfield.

